

02222

1968/10/26

[REDACTED] SANITIZED

1.3(a)(4)
106

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

SANITIZED

E.O. 12333, Sec. 3.4

NIJ 95-31

B7 Cb, NARA, Date 1-18-96

October 1968

1.3(a)(4)

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Walt W. Rostow
Special Assistant to the President

The Honorable Dean Rusk
Secretary of State

SUBJECT: President Thieu's Views Regarding the Issues
Involved in Agreeing to a Bombing Halt

1. [REDACTED] 1.3(a)(4)

2. [REDACTED] President Nguyen Van Thieu
conducted business very much as usual although his main concern during
the period centered around the current talks relating to a bombing halt.
He discussed the situation with almost everyone who visited his office
including senior Cabinet officials, aides and secretaries, and religious
and political personages. Thieu's comments to his visitors indicate
two main concerns about the discussions underway. The first concern
involves the status of the NLF at the negotiating table following a halt
in the bombing. The second point entails Thieu's strong conviction that
DRV concessions in return for a bombing halt must be spelled out and
guaranteed. On both points the President is adamant and his position
remains consistent throughout the reporting period.

3. The President insists he will be intransigent against separate
NLF participation in negotiations. Thieu stated that he will never
negotiate with the NLF as an equal. He has no objection to their inclusion
in the North Vietnamese Delegation but he will not agree to their
sitting at the conference table as a separate entity. NVN and SVN have
recognized governments, Thieu noted, but this is not true of the NLF,
which is only a tool of Hanoi. Thieu asked, "In whose Army do the
Generals of the other side hold rank?"

[REDACTED] 1.3(a)(4)

COPY LBJ LIBRARY

4. Inherent in his concern about the status of participating delegations is Thieu's obvious desire to avoid appearing to be a "U. S. lackey". At one point the President stated that Hanoi wants to meet with the U. S., the GVN and the NLF. Thieu exclaimed that this would make the GVN appear to be a U. S. front. Unless the NLF is denied equal status with the GVN, he disagrees with the American argument that Hanoi's willingness to include the GVN in the Paris talks represents a victory. Negotiating with the NLF also raises the question of honor and he has stated: there is no honor in talking to thieves, let alone the servants of thieves.

5. Thieu stated that South Vietnam could be represented at Paris either separately or jointly with the U. S. However, the question of makeup and seating of all delegations should be clearly defined ahead of time so that no confusion exists about these points.

6. As regards a bombing halt and POW exchanges, Thieu told his Foreign Minister [REDACTED] that on these issues, which are the only ones which concern the U. S., he feels the U. S. can play the leading role. Thieu noted, however, his fear that the U. S. might disassociate the bombing issue from the issue of GVN participation. The President reiterated his belief that what constitutes reciprocity should be agreed to and clearly spelled out prior to a bombing halt.

1.3(a)(4)

7. Thieu also sees a definite connection between the moves now underway and President Johnson's wish to see Vice President Humphrey elected. Thieu referred many times to the U. S. elections and suggested to his visitors that the current talks are designed to aid Humphrey's candidacy. Thieu has said that Johnson and Humphrey will be replaced and then Nixon could change the U. S. position.

1.3(a)(4)